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ABSTRACT

A nationwide survey was conducted of humanities and liberal arts instructors in spring 1983 to obtain information on instructors' age, ethnicity, degrees held, teaching experience, professional activities, goals, full-/part-time status, institutional support, and emphasis on various classroom activities. A comparison of survey results with findings from similar studies conducted in 1975, 1977, and 1978 revealed: (1) full-/part-time ratios had remained steady; (2) 49% of the faculty in 1975 and 36% in 1983 were less than 41 years of age; (3) 48% of the 1975 group and 60% of the 1983 group had taught 11 or more years; (4) gender ratios had remained constant, with males representing 67% of the samples in both 1975 and 1983; (5) minority group representation had increased slightly; (6) 16% of the 1975 respondents and 23% of the 1983 group held doctorates; (7) the 1983 sample seemed to be more professionally oriented; (8) 53% in 1983 and 41% in 1975 indicated that they would like to continue in their current position; (9) the 1983 group had slightly less clerical and paraprofessional support available to them; and (10) the 1983 respondents showed slight increase over the 1977 group in their use of papers, quick score objective tests, essay exams, field reports, oral recitations, workbooks, and class attendance for grade determination. (LAL)

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COMPARING HUMANITIES INSTRUCTORS

Florence B. Brawer

Paper presented to the Association for the Study of Higher Education/AERA-J, San Francisco, Calif.

October 21, 1983

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COMPARING HUMANITIES INSTRUCTORS

Florence B. Brawer

In 1975, 1977, and 1978, we at the Center for the Study of Community Colleges conducted nationwide surveys of instructors teaching the humanities and the sciences. These questionnaires netted a considerable amount of data upon which we formulated several recommendations to increase the then deteriorating plight of the liberal arts in community colleges. To our gratification, many colleges acted upon these ideas, adapting them to their own use and developing programs to implement them. And since then, again to our gratification, we find that both the humanities and the sciences have gained some strength in community colleges nationwide.

But recommendations and their concomitant activities are one thing. Data are another, the foundation upon which considered suggestions are formulated. Recently, the National Endowment for the Humanities asked us to update some of our earlier studies and to compare important findings from previous years with responses to a new survey. Accordingly, in Spring 1983 we administered a survey to a new sample of instructors in community colleges nationwide. Selecting items that had previously proved useful and adding some new items that would provide pertinent information, we surveyed humanities instructors who were teaching 1467 class sections in 159

colleges. These figures compare with the 860 instructors in 178 colleges surveyed in 1977 and selected on the basis of their teaching every Nth section of classes, and with the 1975 sample, which consisted of 1493 humanities instructors in 156 colleges who were chosen by selecting every Nth person listed on faculty rosters.

In spring 1983 we also administered this same survey to 403 liberal arts instructors in colleges that are a part of our six district liberal arts and transfer education projects: City Colleges of Chicago, Dallas County Community College District, Los Angeles Community College District, Maricopa County Community College District, Miami-Dade Community College, and St. Louis Community College. These two cohorts provide us with current information about the way humanities and liberal arts instructors address their teaching, as well as with information that may be compared with responses of the previous two surveys. They also provide us with answers to specific questions. For example, how does the recent sample of humanities instructors compare with previous samples in terms of age, ethnicity, degrees held, and experience? Have the full-time/part-time ratios changed? What types of impact do outside agencies make in terms of providing grants? These are among the questions I will address today.

First, some demographic and experiential information about our respondents. Although the ways in which the three populations were sampled and the differences in survey items account for some discrepancies in response rates, we find consistent answers to many of the questions. For example, full time/part time ratios appear to be remarkably steady. In 1975, 76% of our respondents reported they

were full time; 24%, part time. In 1977 the ratio of full-timers to part-timers was 76:18%, and in 1983, 78:21%.

In terms of age, a shift has occurred over the 1975-1983 time range, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Faculty Age in 10 Year Intervals

	1975 (N=1493)	1983 (N=1467)
Age		
25 and Under	1	1
26-30	12	3
31-35	20	11
36-40	16	21
41-45	13	19
46-50	14	14
51-55	10	13
56-60	8	8
61 and Older	6	11

We see that in 1975, 49% of the faculty were 40 years and younger while in 1983, this age range fell to 36%. Conversely, faculty over 40 years represented 51% of the sample in 1975 and eight years later, 65%

The number of years taught at their present institution also reflects this aging (Table 2).

Table 2
Years Taught at Present Institution

	1975 (N=1493)	1983 (N=1467)
Less than one year	10%	7%
1-2 Years	14%	6%
3-4 Years	17%	8%
5-10 Years	42%	25%
11-20 Years	15%	48%
Over 20 Years	2%	6%

Whereas 48% of the 1975 faculty had taught 11 or more years, 60% of the 1983 faculty so indicated.

In other words, the faculty are getting older. If faculty members had retired and been replaced by new faculty on a one-to-one basis, the age differential would be zero. Our data suggest that despite some incentives for early retirement, most faculty are remaining in their institutions and new faculty are not being hired. This aging factor has implications in terms of salaries as well as in the way the faculty address their work.

Gender is more consistent. In the two periods for which we collected these data (1975 and 1983), males represented 67% and females 33% of the humanities faculty. When it comes to ethnic groups, however, affirmative action does seem to have had an effect. Table 3 shows a slight rise in faculty whose background is American Indian/Alaskan, Black/Afro-American, and Other-than-Chicano/Hispanic

and, concomitantly, a slight decline in White/Caucasian faculty members.

Table 3
Racial/Ethnic Background

	1975 (N=1493)	1983 (N=1479)
American Indian/Alaskan	0.2%	1%
Black/Afro-American	3%	4%
Chicano	2%	2%
Other Hispanic	0.3%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander/ Filipino	1%	1%
White/Caucasian	91%	87%
Other	2%	2%

In previous reports we predicted a rise in the number of instructors who hold the doctorate. This proved to be the case, with 16% reporting the doctorate in 1975, 19% in 1977, and 23% in 1983. On the other hand, in 1975, 24% of our respondents said they were working on the doctorate whereas our recent survey indicates only 16%. The faculty already in the colleges acquire doctorates and, since there are so few new hires, the ratio of non-doctorate holders goes down. These figures help support our thesis of an older, more entrenched faculty teaching the humanities in community colleges.

How does this older, more highly degreed faculty address their work? In a sense, they seem to be more professionally oriented. They tend more to be members of professional organizations, to have attended

regional meetings, and to have presented a paper. Other activities also show tendencies of instructors to be more involved in their profession (Table 4).

Table 4
Professional Activities of Humanities Instructors

	1975 (N=1493)	1983 (N=1467)	Percent Increase
Have you ever			
Received a formal award for outstanding teaching	21%	23%	2%
Taught courses with faculty members outside your department	27%	35%	8%
Had and article published	29%	34%	5%
Attended a conference or symposium related to teaching	76%	78%	2%
Co-authored a book	13%	19%	6%
Applied to an outside agency for a grant	25%	25%	0%
Received grant from own college	4%	10%	6%
Received stipend from private foundation	7%	12%	5%
Received grant from federal/state agency	6%	25%	19%

The 19% increase in grants from federal and state agencies is interesting. Since the 1983 survey asked about sources of outside income, we are able to see how much assistance the National Endowment for the Humanities has provided for faculty members in community colleges. If these figures had been tracked over each subsequent year, we anticipate that we would have seen a gradual increase in support

from this agency.

Our instructor respondents also seem to be somewhat more satisfied with their professional lives than they were in 1975 -- or else, more resigned. Table 5 indicates an increase in seeing as very attractive "Doing what I am doing now" (41% in 1975 and 53% in 1983).

Table 5
Five Years From Now
How Attractive Would You Find

	Very Attractive		Somewhat Attractive		Un-Attractive	
	'75	'83	'75	'83	'75	'83
A faculty position at a four-year college or university	42	35	38	38	20	27
A faculty position at another community or junior college	22	17	44	38	34	44
An administrative position in a community or junior college	15	11	26	25	59	64
A position at a school outside the U.S.	24	18	41	38	35	44
A position in a professional association	6	6	27	29	68	65
Any position but at this college	6	4	21	20	75	77
A non-teaching, non-academic position	3	12	27	33	64	55
I would be doing what I am doing now	41	53	43	35	16	12
I have no idea	8	10	14	12	78	76

At the same time, they also see a non-teaching, non-academic position as very attractive now (3% in 1975 and 12% in 1983). Satisfaction, compliance, and/or a sense of reality, which allows the faculty to know that they are employed at a time when teaching positions are difficult to find are indicated by the facts that they remain in teaching and they appear satisfied with their present institution. Also, they eschew faculty positions at four-year colleges or universities

and at other community colleges; administrative positions in community colleges; academic positions outside the United States; and "any position but this college".

Compared to earlier responses, these same faculty members generally have slightly less assistance available to them in terms of clerical and paraprofessional help, test scoring facilities, and media production -- perhaps another reflection of the fiscal problems in many community colleges. When such help is available to them, they tend to make slightly less use of it (Table 6). Only in the case of media production facilities/assistance do somewhat more instructors now make use of this help (1975 - 41%; 1983 - 49%).

Table 6
Assistance Available/Used

	Assistance is available to me		Will Utilize this term	
	1977 (N=860)	1983 (N=1467)	1977	1983
Clerical help	80	71	59	57
Test-scoring facilities	45	43	17	17
Tutors	40	33	21	17
Readers	13	7	5	3
Paraprofessional aides/ instructional assistants	13	7	6	6
Media production facilities/ assistance	68	67	41	49
Library/bibliographical assistance	82	73	54	51

When it comes to activities or assistance that instructors see as improving their course, today's respondents do not differ much from the 1977 sample when they were first asked about such help (Table 7).

Table 7
What Would It Take
To Make The Course Better?

	1977 (N=860)	1983 (N=1467)
More freedom to choose materials	10%	9%
More interaction with colleagues or administrators	21%	20%
Less interference from colleague or administrators	5%	4%
Larger class (more students)	13%	14%
Smaller class	27%	25%
More reader/paraprofessional aides	12%	13%
More clerical assistance	19%	17%
More media or instructional materials	43%	39%
Stricter prerequisites for admission to class	22%	22%
Fewer or no prerequisites for admission to class	1%	1%
Instructor release time to develop course and/or materials	38%	38%
Special assistance for underprepared students	N/A	45%
Professional development opportunities for instructors	36%	39%

Despite their limited use of media, "More media or instructional materials are still seen as most desirable (1977 - 43%; 1983 - 39%), followed by " Instructor release time to develop course and/or materials (38% for both 1977 and 1983); "Professional development opportunities for instructors" (1977 - 36%; 1983 - 39%); and "Smaller class" (1977 - 27%; 1983 - 25%).

What emphasis do instructors give to various classroom activities? Our respondents were asked about a designated activities strength in determining a student's grade.

Table 8
Emphasis Given To Class Related Activities

	Not included in determining student's grade		Included but counts less than 25% toward grade		Counts 25% or more toward grade	
	1977 (N=860)	1983 (N=1467)	1977	1983	1977	1983
Papers written outside class	35	31	37	36	28	33
Papers written in class	69	67	18	21	12	12
Quick score/objective tests	33	34	26	22	41	44
Essay exams	35	31	19	20	47	49
Field reports	84	81	13	15	3	4
Oral recitations	60	58	31	30	10	12
Workbook completion	89	84	9	12	2	4
Regular class attendance	46	36	44	53	10	11
Participation in class discussion	31	33	55	55	14	12
Individual discussions with instructor	83	85	15	13	2	2
Other	91	82	4	10	6	8

Looking at the activities which count 25% or more in determining the grade, the most recent respondents showed increases over the 1977 sample in terms of papers written outside class (28% - 33%), quick/score objective tests (41% - 44%), essay exams (47% - 49%), field reports (3% - 4%), oral recitations (10% - 12%), workbook completion (2% -4%), regular class attendance (10% - 11%). Although most of these increases are slight and caution must be used in interpreting such small increments, taken together it would seem that instructors are becoming more demanding, stricter in their requirements for students in the classes about which they were reporting. This again may reflect the "older faculty" syndrome discussed earlier, or it may point to greater moves away from the laissez-faire model of the sixties. Whatever its reasons, however, expectations seem to be greater for student performance. If we consider education as a whole and look at higher education today we might also consider that the 1960's calls for "relevance" and "I'll take whatever I want; you can't tell me", are about to turn around. Perhaps this will be more useful for coming generations of community college students.

I thank you.

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